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SUBJECT: Report on the Verband der Freien Presse

DATE OF INFORMATION: Mid-March 1956

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(K)
Vague,
biased

Comment to COS/Reports: The special report which is the subject of present report was obtained by Source from a friend who had been loaned it by Schepky.

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German Federal Republic

DOM-535

Report on the Verband der Freien Presse

Mid-March 1956

Germany, Munich

German Journalist (G); Annals of Germany; 3

1. Leut Oigbly, Staatssekretar of the Chancellory, recently requested Ernst-Christoph Schreyer to prepare for him a paper outlining the situation within the organization of enforce journalists which is called Verband der Freien Presse (Association of Free Journalists).²

2. The report which was prepared for Oigbly in response to his request contained an involved argument designed to show that the present situation in the Verband, and the factors and outside influences which have brought this situation about, is not to the best interests of West Germany. A summary of this argument is as follows: The interests of the "enforcees", the German Federal Republic, and the United States lie in a dynamic policy towards Eastern Europe. The interests of the British and the French lie more in maintaining the status quo. The activities and influence of the Verband should develop naturally along the lines of promoting or supporting a dynamic policy. However, in actual fact, the activities of the Verband are being subtly hindered or disrupted by the French and British who seek to achieve this disruption through indirect influence on the individuals involved through the organization. In the case of the Verband, this influence is exercised through the German officials Schmidt and Von Benda. In the case of the French by Kristof Dreiner and his associates in the Sturm "German Group". As a result of the machinations of Schmidt, Von Benda, and their puppets in the organization such as the Hungarians Hakra and Stanovitch, and the Slovaks Dreiner and Bartel, the organization is being split into irreconcilable factions which result in its becoming ineffectual. This is evidenced by the elections at the annual General Meeting of the group which resulted in re-election of the Hungarian Hakra as Chairman, even though he does not have the support of the majority of the members.

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*Walt (as it is) from
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1. Field Comment: Schepky is a correspondent of the Stuttgart Radio, where he is the specialist on Eastern European Affairs.
2. Field Comment: This organization, whose full title is Verband der Freien Presse Zentral - und Ost-Europas, des Baltikums und des Balkans e.V., is composed of representatives of emigre journalists. It includes representatives of 16 different nationality groups. About 30 publications are issued by the emigre groups affiliated with the Verband. The organization has considerable influence in emigre politics, both in Germany and abroad, since a large proportion of the circulation of these publications goes to other countries, particularly the United States and Canada.

The organization has been drawing some financial support from the U.S. organization Free Europe Citizens Service and the German Büro für Heimatlose Ausländer.

Revived interest by the Germans in this organization is indicated by the fact that the Press and Information Office of the Federal Republic invited representatives of the Verband to a series of conferences held 18-21 January 1956 in Bonn, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, and Cologne. The delegation attended a reception given by Minister Overlaender. The following is the list of the delegates to these conferences: for Albanians, Dr. Alimeti; for White Russians, Vladimir Bortnik; for Bulgarians, Georgi Noeff (Vice-Chairman of the Verband); and Cvetko Penov; for Czechs, Vladimir Pokorsky (Vice-Chairman); for Georgians, (Father) Kantonov; for Jugoslavs, (Prof. Dr.) Ratko Parezanin; for Cossaks, (Ing.) Poljakov; for Lithuanians, Elner Reisenberg; for Hungarians, (Dr.) Zoltan Makra (Chairman), and Dr. Viktor von Stankovich; for Russians, V. Danilov; for Ukrainians, Michail Voskobijnyk and Jaroslav Polensky; for Slovaks, (Prof. Dr.) Heinrich Bartek and Kristof Kreiner (Secretary).

3. Field Comment: Since the report is lengthy, tedious, and somewhat obscure in its involved argumentation, only a summary is provided here.
4. Field Comment: It is not clear from the paper whether the primary purpose of the writer was to outline the developments which have led to the present situation in the Verband or to draw attention

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to his suspicions regarding the activities of the German officials who are supposed to be the caretakers of German interests in this organization.

5. Field Comments: The elections took place in late February 1956.

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